Dedham May 3d, 1840.

My Dear Friend:

As you are doubtless in an agony of impatience to hear the latest intelligence from this centre of the civilized world — upon which the eyes of all Europe are fixed with anxious expectation — the gay & busy metropolis of Norfolk County — I snatch an hasty hour from its seductive pleasures & absorbing pursuits, to relieve your anxiety & refresh myself with a little conversation with you & yours. And first of the most important event of the week to myself personally — viz — the arrival of your letter. I have thanked you for it once in a hurried note written on Thursday evg., but it was good enough to endure a second edition of thanks. Chanticleer was certainly very good & I am not so ungrateful a fox as to say that he was not enough. He certainly did excellently well for a meal ~~that~~ would suffice for some days. But you cannot wonder that in due course of nature poor Reynard should grow ravenous again & audaciously warn you to prepare to have your feathers fly anew. — Of all the budget of news you had to communicate the most interesting to me was what, of course, interested you the most in the telling — the engagement of your sister. The view which you take of the feelings which should be excited by the most important events of life are just — at least they coincide with my own. The days of birth & marriage, no more than that of death, should be marked in the Kalendar of our lives as feasts — nor yet as fasts. They are solemn but not sad occasions. To a healthy mind the train of ideas they suggest is not made up wholly of mirthful & joyous images, nor yet of gloomy & melancholy ones. But though Joy & Sorrow & Hope & Fear all knock at the portals of our hearts when a great change has come or impends over one we love, whether voluntarily assumed or imposed on us by the inevitable course of nature, & demand admission with all their retinue of thick coming fancies, still if Faith & Love be habitual dwellers there, not merely ~~a~~ morning or evening guests, Happiness will will be found there too. Happiness is not a simple emotion of the heart, but is made up of many blended together & duly subordinated to one another. The whitest days of our life owe their brightness to the due intermingling of all its many hues. The event, however, which has occurred in your family must be as free from doubtful forebodings as any human plan or arrangement can be. It seems to be one of those cases in which "Hope" is "Power" & "Change but a name for Joy". I beg you to assure your sister of the interest & sympathy which I feel in this solemn, but I am sure happy, crisis of her life.

I live here very much to my satisfaction. I think that I am well qualified for a country life. Its occupations & pleasures are exciting enough for me & fill up the quiet tenor of my days peacefully & happily. I always yearned for a home in the country and it was ever one of my day-dreams that I should one day possess it. But I had no hope of its coming true so soon & so delightfully. Indeed its fulfilment is one of the fruits of my fanaticism. For if there had been the faintest probability of my ever becoming a great man or being a credit to my family, and this pleasant abode would never have been mine. But when all the gorgeous visions of Presidencies, Governorships, Judgeships & Honorablenesses vanished away, & even poor little Esquire was no more, the country was no longer an objectionable residence. Its quiet might restore the tone of my mind to the wholesome estate of that of men in general, or, at least, my diseased vagaries would be displayed upon a narrower theatre. Whatever may have been the causes which led to my change of condition I am well content with the results. You would smile, but in no sneering spirit to see me at work in my garden or fields with my coat off — as earnestly, & more pleasurably engaged, as I ever was in the pursuit of business or amusement. I already begin to perceive the effects of my labors and hope in due time to regale you with their fruits. If you could have only come here with your husband & the fruit you would have gathered around you! But it was too good ever to have happened. I assure you that when you come to see the place of which I wrote the description that you will not think that I took a leaf out of George Robins book. But I will not aggravate you. I wonder whether you could not come out & spend the summer here somewhere. My friend Mrs Taft is going to a new house tomorrow. I wonder whether she could not take you in. But I am afraid it is too small. However think of these things. I find great satisfaction in the society of Mrs T. She is well freed from the trammels of sectarianism & false public sentiment & is ready to go boldly forward where she thinks duty leads. We have had a good deal of excitement here among the abolitionists & others touching the Anti-pro-slavery-minister-&-churches resolutions. This test is the most searching one which has yet been applied and it will sift the ranks. It is the fan in the hand of the Christ of the present day which will thoroughly purge his floor. We did not know before how incorporated sectarianism & formal worship & temple service was with the minds & hearts of the so called religious public. Biber in the extract from his lectures in the last Non-Resistant forebodes the state of things which is about to come to pass. There are two or three here who are ready to come out from Babylon & be separate & we shall probably have a religious meeting on Sundays for the benefit of those who feel the want of such a social service. Mrs Taft is fully up to the mark & stayed away from church with her children today. Several others will I think be soon ready to make the sacrifice of the ~~religious~~ good opinion of their little religious public to true Religion. We had an A. S. meeting this afternoon after church was over, & a disposition was manifested to compromise matters by having a service which would not interfere with the regular services. But I urged the imperative necessity of holding the meeting at the regular hours— as a most essential part of the testimony. I told them that they had to decide ~~between~~ 1st whether they could conscientiously attend their usual places; 2d if not then whether they could stay at home & do without social worship; 3 thirdly if neither—then they must meet together for that purpose. And also ~~that~~ an opportunity would be afforded for such a gathering to such as wished it. This matter exercises the minds of the true friends most severely but I think they will come out right. There is a good deal of New Organizationism here & this measure & others will help to develope it & put it on its proper footing. We shall have but a small remnant but it will be of the best description. Should we succeed in having our meetings—of which I doubt not, though there may be but two or three gathered together—we shall expect help occasionally from town. Of course it will be a religious meeting not destit to Abolition. Tell Anne ~~that~~ she must take part of the blame of endangering the peace of the churches by her pestilent advice to me at Quincy. We shall rely upon her coming out to preach for us now & then. I think we might derive great edification from the public services of Elders Anne W. & Caroline Weston & not less from those of the Rev. Maria W. Chapman, D.D. By the way, I hope you did not forget to withdraw from Dr. Channing's Church. I believe today is Communion Sunday & it was the time it should have been done & I hope has been. If you have forgotten it, pray, have it done forthwith - write a strong letter to the Dr. & request him to lay it before the Church - & afterwards have it published in the Liberator. All this seems comical to a Unitarian - but you may be assured that it will do great good as an example and a testimony at this time. I could almost feel sorry that I never put on the yoke so that I might have the pleasure of publicly throwing it off. Don't forget. — You may write to Cynthia R. Potter that I will lecture at Pawtucket next Sunday evening, if they wish it & can make the arrangement. I will do it on my way to N.Y. Tell her to write to me here to let me know whether I am to come. Let me know something of Collins plans about our going & what is the history of Phelps & the Marlboro'? — I looked for you on Friday afternoon, though I did not much expect you. Can you not come this week as I proposed in my note to you? At all events I shall expect a day from you as soon as we return from New York. It is perfect Milesian impudence to ask you to write me so often - but as Charles Surface says of his relations say I (saving your presence) of my friends "if you can't take liberties with them, who the — can you take liberties with."

Love to all. Yours ever truly Edmund Quincy.

Maria W. Chapman.
11 West Street.
Boston.

E. Quincy -
Aug 30/1840
from Dedham

No. 11

Ms.A.9.2.13.64